

Number of GPA 5 achievers drops

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THE number of the highest Grade Point Average 5 scorers has dropped in public examinations in the last five years as the students are still unfamiliar with the creative system and due to changes in the evaluation system.

GPA 5 scorers in Junior School Certificate examinations and equivalent exams after Class-VIII, Secondary School Certificate exams and equivalent tests after Class-X and Higher Secondary Certificate exams and equivalent exams after Class-XII have dropped significantly, shows results since 2013.

The percentage point of GPA 5 scorers in the HSC exams dropped from 5.80

in 2013 to 3.26 in 2017, said board officials.

The figure for the SSC exams dropped from 7.03 per cent in 2013 to 5.88 in 2017. Again the rate of GPA 5 achievers in JSC exams went down to 7.94 per cent in 2017 from 9.25 per cent in 2013.

Students achieve a GPA 5 when he or she scores average 80 per cent in marks in all subjects.

Board officials and examiners said that falling of GPA 5 scorers in the public exams once again exposed students' weakness in English and mathematics, two key subjects, in absence of enough qualified teachers, especially at rural schools.

They also blamed experimentation with the evaluation

system that has been going on for some years and the failure of almost half of the teachers in framing school exam questions following the creative system, which have resulted in the students remaining largely unfamiliar with the creative system.

Reduction of 10 marks of multiple choice questions in SSC and HSC since 2016 exams and replacing them with 10 marks of creative writing also played a role behind the dropping of the number of the highest GPA scorers.

Siddiqur Rahman, retired professor at Dhaka University's Institute of Education and Research, said that the change of script evaluation

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and teachers unfamiliarity with creative system were the main reasons for the drop in GPA 5 numbers.

'How a teacher who is not used to in creative method can nurture students who would score better,' asked Siddiqur, who was one of the chief consultants of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board to head the team which developed the existing curriculum.

Former director general of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education Fahima Khatun blamed the lack of familiarity of teachers with the creative method, which in effect causing the students not getting appropriate classroom learning on the system. She also pointed at the students' weakness of Mathematics and English for the drop.

'We have observed that the number of GPA 5 holders is dropping for several years now,' Mahbubur Rahman, director general of DSHE, told New Age.

The main reason was

changes in the evaluation system,' said Mahbubur, the immediate past chairman of Dhaka education board before joining DSHE in the first week of January.

Regarding teachers' failings about the creative method, he said, 'I would not disagree that many teachers of the country have lacks in creative system.'

Education board officials said that 7.94 per cent of the 24.12 lakh examinees in JSC and equivalent exams achieved GPA 5 in 2017 while 9.25 per cent of 18.62 lakh examinees of same exams achieved the same in 2013.

In SSC and equivalent exams, 5.88 per cent examinees of 17.81 lakh achieved GPA 5 in 2017 whereas 7.03 per cent of 12.97 lakh examinees achieved GPA 5 in 2013.

In HSC and equivalent exams, 3.26 per cent of 11.63 lakh examinees achieved GPA 5 in 2017 and 5.80 per cent of 10.02 lakh achieved GPA 5 in the exams in 2013.

'A good number of teachers have been negligent about adopting the creative system though they were given training,' Fahima said.

She made the comments when 52 per cent secondary school teachers were partially or fully incapable of setting question papers in the creative method at school exams, said a DSHE monitoring report in May 2017, which surveyed 18,600 schools.

These teachers could not understand the creative method eight years after the introduction of the system.

Many teachers still had no clear understanding of what the creative method means and these teachers were failing to deliver proper education in classrooms, education officials said.

The government introduced the creative method in phases to reduce student dependence on rote memorisation in 2009. In 2013, creative method was followed in seven papers of four subjects of HSC exams and in 2017, it increased to 50 papers of

26 subjects.

Besides, the creative method was followed for 18 subjects in SSC exams in 2013 and for 23 subjects in 2017.

Dhaka-based Abhibhabak Oikya Forum president Ziaul Karim Dulu said that the teachers used to provide more marks to students than the really deserved, resulting in an inflated pass rate and high number of GPA 5 scorers.

'The new script evaluation system has contributed to the reduction of GPA 5 numbers,' he said.

'Inexperience with the creative method played a vital role. Passing an exam is easy but scoring 80 out of 100 is tough when teachers are unfamiliar with the creative method,' he added.

Mahbubur Rahman said that they had already provided training on the creative method to several lakh teachers and had started training 2,100 master trainers who would train another 1.10 lakh teachers.